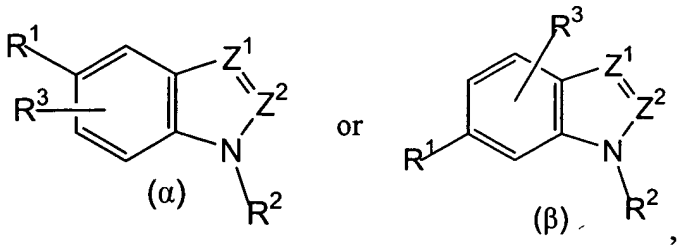
Abstract

Compounds of the formula:



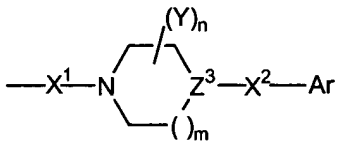
and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof,

wherein each of Z^1 and Z^2 is independently CR^4 or N;

where each R^4 is independently H or is alkyl (1-6C) or aryl, each of said alkyl or aryl optionally including one or more heteroatoms selected from O, S and N and optionally substituted by one or more of halo, OR, SR, NR_2, RCO, COOR, $CONR_2$, OOCR, or NROCR where R is H or alkyl (1-6C), or by one or more CN or =O, or by one or more aliphatic or aromatic 5-or 6-membered rings optionally containing 1-2 heteroatoms; or

two R^4 taken together form a bridge optionally containing a heteroatom;

R^1 is



;

wherein

X^1 is CO or an isostere thereof;

m is 0 or 1;

Y is optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted aryl, or optionally substituted arylalkyl or two Y taken together may form an alkylene (2-3C) bridge;

n is 0 or 2;

Z^3 is CH or N;

X^2 is CH, CH_2 or an isostere thereof; and

Ar consists of one or two phenyl moieties directly coupled to X^2 optionally substituted by halo, nitro, alkyl (1-6C), alkenyl (1-6C), alkynyl (1-6C), CN or CF_3, or by RCO,

COOR, $CONR_2$, NR_2, OR, SR, OOCR or NROCR wherein R is H or alkyl (1-6C) or by phenyl, itself optionally substituted by the foregoing substituents;

R^2 is H, or is alkyl (1-6C) or aryl, each of said alkyl or aryl optionally including one heteroatom which is O, S or N, and optionally substituted by one or more of halo, OR, SR, NR_2, RCO, COOR, $CONR_2$, OOCR, or NROCR where R is H or alkyl (1-6C), alkynyl (1-6C), or by one or more CN or =O, or by one or more aliphatic or aromatic 5- or 6-membered rings optionally containing 1-2 heteroatoms;

R^3 is H, halo, NO_2, alkyl (1-6C), alkenyl (1-6C), alkynyl (1-6C), CN, OR, SR, NR_2, RCO, COOR, $CONR_2$, OOCR, or NROCR where R is H or alkyl (1-6C)

are disclosed. These compounds are selective inhibitors of p38α kinase.